

BEWARE OF THE PRIDE OF UNINSPIRED SCIENCE

Republished December 16, 2002 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The following is from "A Caution against Anti-Christian Science," a sermon preached in 1871 by Robert Lewis Dabney. The sermon was published at the request of the Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, John L. Marye.

Every Christian should be familiar with the fact that the human mind, as well as heart, has been impaired by the fall. Men 'so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.' From the nature of the case, the misguided intellect is unconscious of its own vice; for consciousness of it would expel it. Its nature is to cause him who is deceived to think that error is truth, and its power is in masking itself under that honest guise. ...

And how can the Christian expect that uninspired science will ever be purged of uncertainty and error, by any organon of investigation invented by men? Even if the organon were absolute, pure truth, its application by fallen minds must always ensure in the results more or less of error, except in those exact sciences of magnitudes where the definiteness of the predications and fewness of the premises leave no room for serious mistake.

We find that physical science always has some tendency to become anti- theological. This tendency is to be accounted for by two facts: one is, that man is a depraved creature, whose natural disposition is enmity against God. The other explanation is, that these physical sciences continually tend to exalt naturalism; their pride of success in tracing natural causes, tempts them to refer everything to them, and thus to substitute them for a spiritual, personal God.

The whole posture and tone of this class of [scientists] towards revelation is hostile and depreciatory; their postulates, with their manner of making them, imply a claim of far more authority for human science than is allowed to inspiration. Thus, the attempt to restrain any corollaries, however sweeping, which they may draw by the teachings of Scriptures is usually resented. These physicists never dream of surrendering a deduction simply to the Bible contradiction of it. Thus they betray very plainly whether they think human science more certain than revelation. The implication is, that the Scriptures really settle nothing by their own testimony; that is, that they have no true authority with these scholars.

While I do not charge infidelity upon all physicists, the tendency of much of so-called modern science is skeptical. The advocates of these new conclusions may plead that they only postulate a new exposition of Scripture, adjusted to the results of the 'advanced modern thought.' But I ask, can any exegesis make our Bible speak all the propositions which I enumerated above, and all the rest which it may please the adventurous innovators to announce, without damaging its authority as a

sure rule of faith? The common sense of most men will conclude that such a book is only a lump of clay in the hand of priestcraft, to be moulded into such shape as may suit its impostures. We freely grant all that can be said in favor of caution and exhaustive study, in placing a meaning upon the words of Scripture; but a Bible which does not assert its own independent meaning, as fairly interpreted by itself; a Bible which shall wait for distinct and changing human sciences to tell us what it shall be permitted to signify, is no sufficient rule of faith for an immortal soul.

Beware, then, my brethren, lest any man spoil you through this vain, deceitful philosophy. Are you ready to surrender the infallibility of your Bibles? Consider how disastrous it may be to have these new opinions asserted without contradiction. It may be that your son, or daughter, or young pupil, is just now experiencing the bitter struggle of the carnal mind against the calls of the sanctifying Spirit, or that inflamed appetite is panting to overleap the odious but wholesome restraints of the revealed law. How dangerous, at this critical hour, to have them taught that philosophers have found, amidst the stony strata and musty fossils which they explore, undoubted evidence of mistakes in Moses, Paul, and Christ! You must resist, or you must practically surrender your Bibles.

Unless our Bible--when cautiously and candidly interpreted by its own light--is inspired and infallible, it is no sufficient rule of faith for an immortal soul. Such the Bible is, notwithstanding all the pretended discoveries of vain philosophy. Modern events have not loosened a single foundation stone of the Bible's authority, nor can any such discoveries, from their very nature, affect it.

As I argued at the outset, so I insist here: that this finite, fallen, imperfect reason is incompetent to invent an infallible method of investigation, or to apply it with unflinching correctness, if it were given to us. Partial error has marked all results of our forefathers' speculations; and if we should arrogate to ourselves an entire exemption from similar mistakes, this vain conceit of ourselves would be the strongest ground for prognosticating our failure. Physical science will remain, in part, uncertain and changeable, for the simple reason that it will still be the work of men.

The supposed conclusions, which seem adverse to the Scriptures as understood by common Christians, are parts of an unstable, because an incomplete system. And I will venture the assertion, without other faculty or acquirement than the light of common sense, that these conclusions are far short of that perfect, exclusive demonstration which would be necessary to unseat the Bible from its throne of authority.

Do you suppose that their proofs [those who postulate evolutionary origins are of that character which, in a court of justice, would stand the test of adverse counsel at law in every link, and remain so conclusive beyond all doubt as to justify an honest jury in taking a fellow creature's life? The inventors themselves would doubtless recoil with a shock from such a responsibility!

But the Bible, by reason of its demonstrative evidences from the independent fields of history, criticism, miracles, fulfilled prophecy, internal moral character, and divine effects on human souls, is in prior possession of the ground of authority. We hold the defensive. The burden of proof against us rests with the physicists. Nothing is done to oust the Bible, until they construct a complete,

exhaustive demonstration; not only that created things may have arisen, as modern science surmises, but that they must have arisen thus, and not otherwise (Dabney, "A Caution against Anti-Christian Science," *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, Vol. III, pp. 152- 164).

[Distributed by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. These articles cannot be stored on BBS or Internet sites or sold or placed by themselves or with other material in any electronic format for sale, but may be distributed for free by e-mail or by print. They must be left intact and nothing removed or changed, including these informational headers. The Fundamental Baptist Information Service is a listing for Fundamental Baptists and other fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. Our goal in this particular aspect of our ministry is not devotional but is TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST PREACHERS IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THIS APOSTATE HOUR. This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the list. If somehow you have subscribed unintentionally, following are the instructions for removal. TO SUBSCRIBE to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service, send an email to lists@wayoflife.org and put "subscribe FBIS" in the subject field. To UNSUBSCRIBE, send an email to lists@wayoflife.org and put "unsubscribe FBIS" in the subject field. To change addresses, simply unsubscribe the old one, then re-subscribe the new one. Or a more simple process is to go to the web site and sign up or change addresses there: <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbis/subscribe.html> We take up a quarterly offering to fund this ministry, and those who use the materials are expected to participate (Galatians 6:6). Some of these articles are from O Timothy magazine, which is in its 19th year of publication. Way of Life publishes many helpful books. The catalog is located at the web site: <http://www.wayoflife.org/catalog/catalog.htm> Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org (e-mail). OFFERINGS can be made at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/offering.html> PAYPAL offerings can be made to <https://www.paypal.com/xclick/business=dcloud%40wayoflife.org>]